

**Town of Bethany Beach
Planning Commission Minutes
February 20, 2010**

The Bethany Beach Planning Commission held a meeting on Saturday, February 20, 2010 in the Bethany Beach Town Hall, 214 Garfield Parkway, Bethany Beach, DE 19930.

The following members were present: Lew Killmer, who presided; Chuck Peterson; Faith Denault; Kathleen Mink; Fulton Loppatto; John Gaughan; and Susan Frederick, Building Inspector.

Also Present: Rosemary Hardiman; Lindsey Shallcross, Administrative Secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

OPENING OF MEETING

Approval of Agenda

Ms. Denault made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Gaughan seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Discussion/Approval of the Planning Commission Minutes of November 21, 2009

Ms. Denault made a motion to approve the minutes dated November 21, 2009. Seconded by Mr. Loppatto, the motion was unanimously approved.

Announcements/Comments/Updates

Non-Residential Design Review Update (Killmer/Denault)

There was no meeting this month so there was no report.

Comments/Updates Regarding the February Town Council Meeting (Killmer)

Mr. Killmer reported the following:

Bethany Beach Recycling

Delaware Solid Waste Authority (DSWA), who currently is the vendor for the Town's recycling program, is phasing itself out of the recycling business. The Town evaluated the contracts of other potential vendors, but the Town is giving serious consideration of having the Town collect its own recyclables. The Town is considering retrofitting two of the Town's trash trucks to collect the recycled materials, which will cost \approx \$10,000. Public Works Director, Brett Warner, felt that it would not be an issue for the Town to take on this added responsibility. Currently only 25 percent of the Town's residents recycle. Having the Town collect the recyclables would be the most cost effective alternative to those who wish to continue to recycle.

Delaware Solid Waste Authority (DSWA) will provide the Town the DSWA's recycling containers free of charge as long as the Town collects the recyclables and not an outside vendor. If the Town had to purchase these containers the cost is \approx \$75 per container, so Bethany Beach will not have to buy carts if the Town does the recycling in the future.

Ms. Denault questioned if the Town's handles the recycling on its own will become a problem during the summer since recycling is collected weekly during the summer.

Mr. Killmer responded that it most likely will not because the Town hires additional seasonal employees in the summer time, and stated that Mr. Warner feels that the Town can meet the challenge. Mr. Killmer added that if it got to the point where 50-75 percent of the Town was recycling then they might have to consider hiring additional staff.

Mr. Killmer noted that recycling program is important to Bethany Beach, so they don't want to discourage the residents from not continuing to recycle in the future by increasing the cost by too much.

Garfield Parkway Utility Re-Location

All of the bids are in, including the bids for the new lighting, which will replace the current lighting that are attached to the telephone poles that are scheduled to be removed.

The final Public Hearing for Phase 1 of the Garfield Parkway Streetscape Project is scheduled for March 1, 2010. The plan is to have signed contracts by March or April timeframe. The project will probably begin by the end of the summer.

Mr. Killmer expressed the benefits of this project, which will include upgraded lighting as well as additional lighting along Garfield Parkway from Route 1 to Atlantic Avenue. A different type of lighting fixtures will be installed at the two major street intersections, which are required to meet DELDOT lighting requirements at intersections.

The Proposal to Permit and Regulate the Use of Solar Energy Systems

The Planning Commission's proposal went through the Town Council Workshop without any changes requested by the Town Council. The proposed legislation is being sent to the Town's attorney to be rewritten in the form of an ordinance for consideration and approval by the Town Council hopefully in the near future.

Pay Stations

Mr. Killmer pointed out to the Planning Commission members that there is a model of the proposed new pay station in the Council Chambers for the Planning Commission members to become familiar with its operation and benefits.

Some facts about the pay stations are as follows:

- A German company called Hectronics makes the pay stations. Currently the company installs, maintains and operates these pay stations through out the world except the United States.

- The plan is to initially install eighteen (18) along each of the beach area street ends.
- The pay stations will be bolted to the concrete and will be removed during the off-season.
- They are all solared powered, with a battery back up.
- The pay stations are capable of displaying important messages and information for visitors.
- Each unit can be continually monitored from the Town Office.
- There will be a total of thirty-five (35) pay stations throughout the Town, but there will not be any on Pennsylvania Avenue.
- Parking meters will remain at all handicap parking spots to eliminate the need for handicapped individuals to have to walk to and from a pay station.
- A pay station parking permit ticket can be paid for with coins or a credit card.
- An individual is able to purchase any amount of time on a pay station, and is able to use the same ticket to park at any other parking space in Town within the amount of time purchased.

The Town will pay Hectronics for the pay stations over a five-year period, which is estimated to cost the Town about \$387,625. Installation will cost \$200 per unit. It is estimated based on previous experience with pay stations in other towns, the Town should receive additional parking revenue of \approx \$40,000 per year.

Ms. Denault asked why the use of pay stations was being considered. Mr. Killmer replied that the parking meters were getting old and constantly needed to be repaired and/or replaced as well as the meters filling up very quickly with quarters therefore being more difficult and more costly to manage. Other pay station vendors were interviewed and bids obtained, but overall Hectronics offered the best pay stations at the best price.

Mr. Loppatto acknowledged that the new pay stations would save a lot on maintenance related issues.

Mr. Killmer agreed that they will be a great improvement to the Town. The Town is planning to begin removing the meter poles sometime next year.

Design Review Committee Update

Mr. Killmer asked Ms. Frederick if she had any updates for the Design Review Committee. She said that two businesses are considering making changes, but she will know more specific details in the future.

Comments, Q&A and Discussion for Planning Commissioner Members (All)

There were no questions from the Planning Commission members at this time.

Mr. Killmer reported that he has been working on a proposal for the Planning Commission members to consider and comment on regarding how the Town and the Bethany Beach Business Community can work together to slowly transition the downtown commercial district to more year round type of businesses and not to focus on

the types of businesses that principally service those individuals who vacation in Bethany Beach.

He has been conducting research principally using the Internet on how other communities have worked with individual business owners on working together to attract more upscale and year round types of businesses in their downtown zoning districts.

Mr. Killmer mentioned that the City of Rehoboth is a good model for Bethany Beach to follow, noting the many benefits of the Rehoboth Beach Main Street Project and their ability to attract more upscale year round businesses as well as their ability to obtain grants and attract outside funding sources. The first step is to survey the number and different types of businesses that are in the Bethany Beach, Dewey Beach, Rehoboth Beach and Lewes Downtown Business Districts.

Ms. Mink acknowledged the outstanding work of the Town's Personnel during the recent snow storms.

Board of Adjustment Update:

The hearing was held for the variance filed by Brosnahan Custom Homes, for the property identified as Block 102, Lot 16, at 114 Central Ave., in the R-1 Zoning District pursuant to Section 425-4 and 425 Appendix 3 of the Code of The Town of Bethany Beach on February 16, 2010. There were 15 letters written by residents opposing the variance. The Board denied the variance with a 3-0 vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT/QUESTIONS FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION

There were no comments/questions at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Five Year Review and Update of Bethany Beach's 2005 Comprehensive Plan (Mink)

Mr. Killmer acknowledged that he has requested a graduate student from the University of Delaware be hired to assist the Planning Commission in completing the five-year update of Bethany Beach's 2005 Comprehensive Plan.

The Town is required by law to hold two public hearings before the updated plan can be submitted to the State's PLUS program for review and approval.

Mr. Peterson advised that they need to look at where the Town is now and where it wants to be five years from now, and add it into the plan.

Mr. Killmer agreed that they need to have annual updates, but pointed out that unattainable goals aren't to be put into the comprehensive plan. Only achievable goals should be published.

Ms. Mink provided the following information on her noted suggested revisions to the Comprehensive Plan:

She proposed a revision of the layout and content of the Bethany Beach's 2005 Comprehensive Plan so that it would be committee-by-committee achievements and future goals and/or directions focused document.

The Planning Commission identified a starting point based action plan. Kathleen Mink added that where specific goals are to be added, they are required to be set by the Town Council before the document is approved. The various components of the plan need to be completed one at a time because they involve identifying and obtaining resources. The goals will be set by each committee that will be responsible for implementing them, which is different than the way it was done previously. In the previous plan, points were presented as recommendations and she revised them to be set as goals, which are stronger than recommendations. As it is updated, goals will either be changed or eliminated.

Mr. Killmer acknowledged that Ms. Mink did an excellent job editing and consolidating the current Comp. Plan.

Ms. Mink stated that the committees of the Town probably would require Town resources for the work to be completed. When the committees get down to tactics, some of the standing committees could possibly generate volunteers to assist in updating the Comp. Plan. She added that this project requires active participation of the Town.

Mr. Killmer advised that there is little involvement from the State when it comes to the Bethany Beach Comprehensive Plan because there aren't many zoning, land use and annexation related changes. Mr. Loppatto noted that there is still development occurring in big subdivisions outside the corporate limits of Bethany Beach that might have a negative impact on the Town.

Mr. Gaughan questioned, what does the Delaware Code say the Comprehensive Plan should be? He noted that there are specific items that the Plan should address. There should be an executive summary or opening statement that addresses the important elements and proposed changes in the updated Comp. Plan.

Mr. Killmer agreed that an executive summary is a great idea, but he also indicated information about Comprehensive Plans content requirements are not part of the Delaware State Law. He also informed the members that the current format of Bethany Beach's Comprehensive Plan was modeled directly from the State's Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Killmer said one of the critical aspects of updating the Plan is that the Planning Commission updates the goals that were listed in the 2005 Plan and address them in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Mink added that it's important to accomplish one goal at a time before moving onto the next, and that a good way to do this is to create a checklist containing the issues that have been done, what has not been done, and what still needs to be done.

After some continued discussion between the Planning Commission members, Mr. Killmer suggested that they take one section at a time, using Ms. Mink's document as a starting point. Then a cover sheet needs to be generated. The requested intern will contribute to the start of this project by correlating the format and information together efforts.

Mr. Killmer is going to review the document for updates and then send it to the members, who will also make possible additional updates before sending it back to him. Ms. Denault is going to create a page of each Committee's purpose in able to develop future goals and directions that the Town might consider.

Mr. Gaughan suggested that they consider using the "Google Wave" program to update the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Loppatto is going to investigate whether it's worth using, and possibly setting up a demo for the next meeting.

The next Planning Commission meeting is going to be next month.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

SUMMARIZE ACTION ITEMS

- A. Ms. Denault will obtain the current description and purpose for each Bethany Beach Committee for the purpose of obtaining future goals/tactics and/or direction from each committee that will be part of the 2010 Comp. Plan update.
- B. Mr. Killmer will perform a page-by-page review of the 2005 Comp. Plan and identify those sections of the 2005 Comp. Plan can be used in the 2010 without changes and/or edits and those sections that require updating and he will have it ready prior to the next PC meeting.

ADJOURN

Mr. Loppatto made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Denault seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:17 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Lindsey Shallcross, Admin. Secretary